2020 HEALTH CARE LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE GUIDE

Health care access and cost remains one of the most important problems facing America.

- Georgia has the second-highest uninsured rate in the United States (**14% in 2018**).

- Georgia's **unemployment rate jumped to 12.6% in April** on a seasonally adjusted basis. It was 7.6% in June, which likely has **severed tens of thousands of Georgians from their employer sponsored insurance**.

- The COVID pandemic is drastically impacting insurance coverage for Georgians -- **133,000 Georgians enrolled in Medicaid** in between May and April of 2020 alone.

- As of June 26, 2020, a **disproportionate number of those infected** (66%) and those dying (55%) in Georgia are **Black, Indigenous, and people of color**, who make up only 48% of the state's population.

- **Access to health care in rural areas** has only become more challenging during the pandemic and will likely have **lasting impacts on rural communities.** For example, five counties in rural, southeast Georgia **depend** on Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital in Albany, which has only 50 ICU beds. A recent **Georgia-based study** stresses that the rural populations which depend on these sparse beds are at high-risk due to relatively higher age and lower income.

- **Seniors are at greatest risk. As of June 26**, 2020 85% COVID deaths in Georgia were among patients aged 60 or older.

- In late April, it was **projected** that **Georgia would face a $4 billion deficit** over the next 15 months.

The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the need for practical solutions that address both the immediate challenges and the long-term gaps in our health care systems to ensure Georgians can access quality health care they can afford.

KEY MESSAGES FOR CANDIDATES:

☐ **Acknowledge the moment:** "Our country is at a pivotal moment. The pandemic, economic recession, and national discussion on race have created a renewed call for action. They have also magnified the critical problems that exist in our health care system."

☐ **Take an active stance:** "It is long past time to examine our systems and address gaps that have existed for decades. We must find solutions and common ground to build a health care system that serves everyone."

☐ **Commit to prioritize people's needs:** "I will put people's health care needs first and I'm already formalizing the ways I gather input and work with community and business leaders to put effective solutions in place."

☐ **Commit to both addressing disparities and finding common ground:** "The health care system, as it's currently structured, isn't working for far too many. I will work to address the lack of fairness and shared needs to build a health care system that works for all of us."

Learn more about United States of Care at **unitedstatesorcare.org**.
For more information or to seek assistance, contact USofCare at **Help@USofCare.org**.